

## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education

### **PROVINCE HELPS FUND ECO-FRIENDLY HYBRID SCHOOL BUS**

KELOWNA – The Province will contribute \$50,000 for a new low-emission, environmentally friendly hybrid school bus in the Central Okanagan school district – the first of its kind in Canada, Kelowna-area MLAs Rick Thorpe, Sindi Hawkins and Al Horning announced on Earth Day.

“It is important that we show our children we care about our environment,” said Okanagan-Westside MLA Rick Thorpe. “This is a great step in reducing our emissions by 33 per cent by 2020.”

“It is great to see our district taking the initiative to introduce eco-friendly transportation to the community,” said Kelowna-Mission MLA Sindi Hawkins. “Caring for the environment is a responsibility we all share and setting an example for our children to follow is something I applaud our district for.”

Hybrid vehicles use a battery-powered electric motor during lower speeds, and then a diesel-powered engine starts after the vehicle reaches 40 km/h. Batteries are recharged when the driver brakes.

“This is a fantastic way to educate children on environmental issues,” said Kelowna-Lake Country MLA Al Horning. “If we can promote the importance of environmental sustainability, even by integrating into our daily routine, it will make a world of difference.”

Hybrid vehicles are up to 40 per cent more fuel efficient than a regular diesel bus, and there is less wear-and-tear on the engine. A school bus driven 20,000 km a year could save 5,000 litres of diesel fuel, or more than \$4,500 at today's prices.

A 72-passenger hybrid vehicle costs approximately \$230,000 – about \$120,000 more than a regular school bus. The district had \$180,000 available, thanks to approved capital funding and savings from other bus purchases. The Province will contribute the additional \$50,000.

“We are all becoming more aware of the importance of protecting our environment,” said school board chair Moyra Baxter. “Our school district already has an anti-idling bylaw, and when that hybrid bus picks up and drops off students there will be no fumes. We'd like to thank the Province for its contribution to this purchase.”

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The hybrid school bus supports the Province's throne speech commitment to reduce B.C.'s greenhouse gas emissions by at least one-third below current levels by 2020. The bus will be running in Kelowna in time for the new school year in September.

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Media      Lara Perzoff  
contact:    Public Affairs Bureau  
              Ministry of Education  
              250 356-5963  
              250 920-9040 (cell)

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